

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

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DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L 1596

LIMDIS

E.O 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINR, MILI, BU

SUBJECT: ALLEDGED RESTRICTED AREA VIOLATIONS

REF: USDAO SOFIA CONF 0335 AUG 74

1. ON SEPTEMBER 3 DCM WAS CALLED TO MFA OFFICE OF PROTOCOL WHERE OFFICIAL BEGAN CONVERSATION BY REFERRING TO EMBASSY NOTE REGARDING LOSS IN SOFIA OF REAR LICENSE PLATE NO. DT-0086 BELONGING TO COLONEL ROBERT HURST AIRA. OFFICIAL STATED NOTE ERRONEOUS IN STATING THAT PLATE LOST IN CITY OF SOFIA AS IT HAD BEEN FOUND ON AUGUST 28 IN VILLAGE OF MIROVJANE WHICH OVERLOOKS THE MILITARY AIRFIELD AT DOBROSLAVCI. HE STATED AREA IS SENSITIVE AND THAT ROAD USED BY COLONEL'S CAR TO ENTER VILLAGE HAS A NO ENTRY SIGN WHICH WAS IGNORED. FURTHER ALLEGED THAT CAR WITH TWO PASSENGERS WAS TRAVELING AT HIGH SPEED AND LOCAL CITIZENS UNABLE TO WARN DRIVER THAT STREET WAS CLOSED. ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL, COLONEL HURST'S CAR HAD BEEN OBSERVED IN THIS SENSITIVE GENERAL AREA ON AUGUST 17, 21, 22 AND 24.

2. AFTER RELATING DETAILS WHICH HE READ FROM PREPARED STATEMENT, OFFICIAL CONTINUED BY STATING THIS IS SECOND KNOWN VIOLATION COMMITTED BY COLONEL HURST. THE FIRST VIOLATION OF SOME MONTHS AGO WAS BROUGHT TO HIS ATTENTION BY FOREIGN LIASON OFFICE OF
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MINISTRY OF DEFENSE. SECOND VIOLATION NOW BEING BROUGHT TO DCM'S

ATTENTION WITH REQUEST THAT COLONEL HURST BE WARNED THAT THIS IS SECOND VIOLATION AND THAT HE BE INSTRUCTED TO OBSERVE STRICTLY RULES CONTROLLING RESTRICTED AREAS. OFFICIAL THEN STATED THAT COLONEL HURST NOT ONLY MEMBER OF US EMBASSY TO VIOLATE RESTRICTED AREA RECENTLY. STATE DT 0090 REGISTERED TO MR. SVENDSEN, SECOND SECRETARY OF EMBASSY, HAD ON AUGUST 25 DRIVEN THROUGH RESTRICTED AREA BETWEEN MEZDRA AND VRASA.

3. AFTER OFFICIAL FINISHED STATEMENT DCM ASKED TO RESPOND AND SAID CHARGE THAT MR. SVENDSEN HAD ENTERED A RESTRICTED AREA TRUE. EXPLAINED SVENDSEN, WHO IS NEW OFFICER, HAD NOT REALIZED HE HAD ENTERED RESTRICTED AREA AND WHEN DCM LEARNED OF VIOLATION SHE HAD TAKEN STEPS TO ASSURE THAT THIS TYPE MISTAKE NOT REPEATED. OFFERED REGRETS AND EMPHASIZED POLICY OF EMBASSY IS THAT ALL PERSONNEL STRICTLY OBSERVE RESTRICTED AND NO ENTRY RULES AND REGULATIONS.

4. WITH REGARD TO ALLEGED VIOLATION BY COLONEL HURST, DCM SAID COLONEL IS EXPERIENCED OFFICER WHO CAREFULLY OBSERVES RULES. AS EXPLAINED TO FOREIGN LIAISON OFFICE ON FIRST CHARGE OF VIOLATION, NO ENTRY SIGN WAS NOT IN PLACE WHEN COLONEL ENTERED AREA. AS FOR ALLEGED VIOLATION ON AUGUST 28, DCM DID NOT BELIEVE COLONEL HURST HAD ENTERED NO ENTRY AREA AND SUGGESTED OFFICIAL CHECK WITH PROPER OFFICIALS TO ASSURE THAT NO ENTRY SIGN WAS IN FACT IN PLACE MORNING OF AUGUST 28 WHEN COLONEL HURST WAS SUPPOSED TO BE IN VILLAGE. OFFICIAL CAREFULLY TOOK NOTES ON THIS COMMENT AND SAID HE WOULD CHECK.

5. COMMENT: OFFICIAL WAS DEAD SERIOUS IN HIS WARNING BUT NEVER THREATENED OR HINTED AT PNG ACTION. HOWEVER, WARNING MUST BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY AND IF THERE IS ANOTHER CHARGE AGAINST COL HURST, GOB CAN BE EXPECTED TO TAKE SUCH ACTION. THIS WARNING SHOULD NOT BE OVERLOOKED WHEN DIA PLACES REQUIREMENTS ON DAO HERE. REQUIREMENTS THIS SUMMER HAVE RESULTED IN ALMOST CONSTANT TRAVEL BY ATTACHES AND HAS TAKEN THEM INTO SENSITIVE AREAS. AS WASHINGTON CERTAINLY AWARE, ONE PNG COULD UNDO GREAT DEAL OF WHAT HAS BEEN SO PAINFULLY ACHIEVED IN IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS. WE ARE, HOWEVER, PREPARED TO TAKE RISK IF OBJECTIVE WORTH IT.

6. FYI: COLONEL HURST PROBABLY DID LOSE LICENSE PLATE IN MIROVJANE
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MORNING AUGUST 28 BUT HE IS CERTAIN ROAD DID NOT HAVE NO ENTRY SIGN IN PLACE UNTIL LATER THAT DAY. TO MEET REQUIREMENTS HE HAS FREQUENTLY BEEN IN AREA AROUND AIRFIELD.
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